

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Act

A Liaison Training Tool For
Administrators, Faculty And Staff

(Use With Referral Form & Getting It Right Flowchart)



January, 2009

Small Group Activity

1. Why are we concerned about students who are homeless?
2. What are some of the problems homeless students face?
3. Are there any legal obligations related to serving homeless students?
4. Who is responsible in your school for identifying and enrolling homeless students.

What do we know about homeless students?

- In one year, 42% transferred schools at least once and 51% transferred twice or more.
- 28% will attend three or more schools in one year.
- With each school change, it is estimated that a student is set back academically by an average of four to six months.
- Three quarters of older homeless youths drop out of school.



What do we know about
homelessness in Vermont?

Vermont has the highest rate of homelessness in New England.

University of Massachusetts-Boston, “Homelessness in New England: Results from the Winter 2006-2007 Point-in-Time Counts”

Median purchase price of a home in 2007 was \$201,000. This was a 101% increase since 1996. A Vermont family would need an income of \$65,000 as well as \$14,000 in cash to purchase that home.

Vermont Housing Finance Agency

January, 2008 “Point In Time” count indentified 2,249 homeless citizens, of which 503 were children under the age of 18.

*“January 30, 2008 Point In Time Report”, Balance Continuum of Care
HMIS Quality Management Council, May, 2008*

Vermont schools identified and enrolled 833 homeless students during the 2007-08 school year

- 39% were doubled up with other families
- 39% were living in shelters
- 16% were living in hotels/motels
- 6% were unsheltered, living in cars, camping trailers, tents, unknown

The McKinney Vento Homeless Assistance Act...

- Maintains educational continuity during a time of transition
- Requires schools to identify and enroll students who meet the definition of homeless
- Is authorized under the “No Child Left Behind Act”

What is the definition of a Homeless Student?

A homeless student is an individual who lacks a **fixed, regular, and adequate** nighttime residence.

Students may be homeless as a result of eviction, economic hardship, divorce, illness, natural disaster, domestic violence and may be living in:

- Shared housing (doubled up)
- Motels, hotels, campgrounds
- Shelters or emergency housing
- Cars, parks, or other public places that are not designed for regular sleeping accommodations
- Lack of alternative adequate housing

What is the definition of an Unaccompanied Youth?

An Unaccompanied Youth who is considered homeless is someone who is not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian **and** lacks a **fixed, regular, and adequate** nighttime residence

How would you identify a student who might be homeless?

- Early arrival or departure from school
- Tardy, unusual absences or change in routine
- Lack of appropriate clothing for season
- Use of school facilities for personal needs
- Storing clothes or personal items at school
- Stressed, sleepy, change in behavior
- Hygiene issues
- Change in grades or school performance
- Lack of school supplies, lost books/supplies
- Loss of access to computer

How are schools required to serve homeless students?

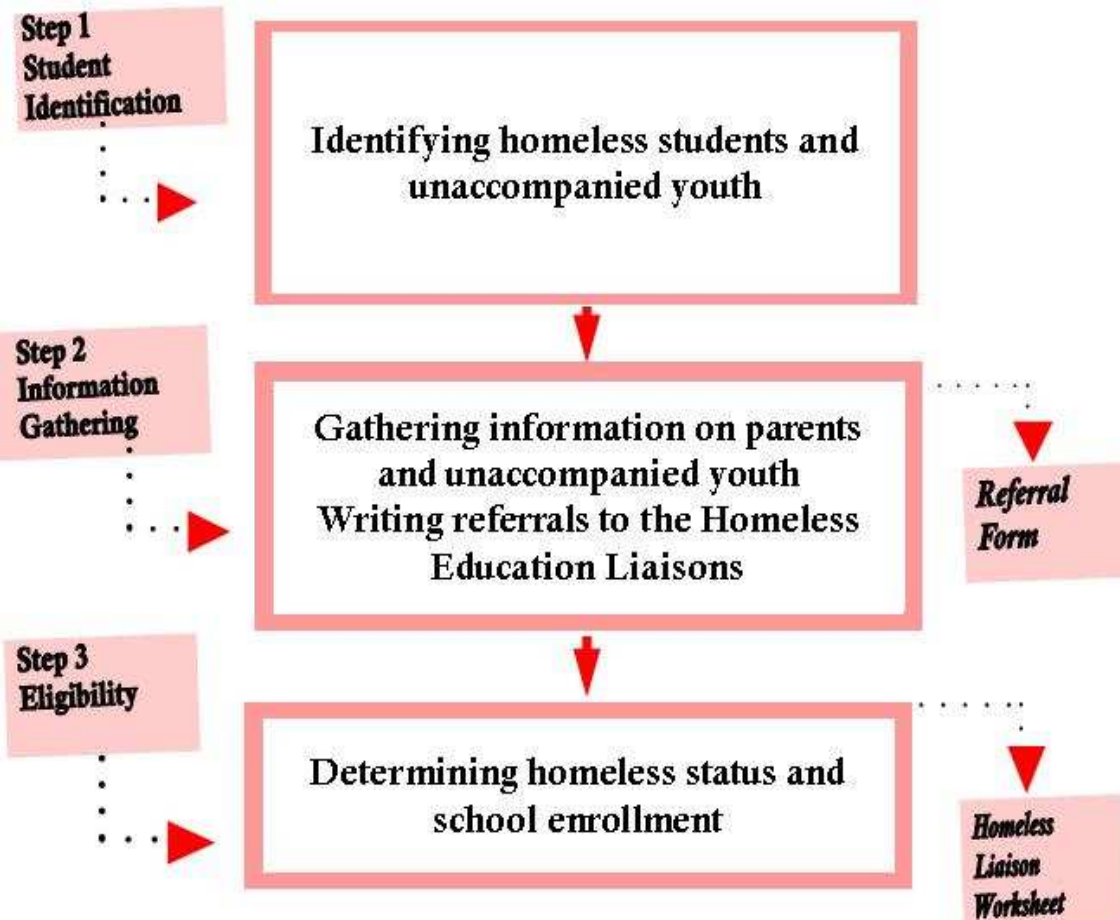
- Every supervisory union must designate a homeless education liaison to the Vermont Department of Education in April of each year
- Identify and immediately enroll homeless students based on the best interest of the child and the preference of the parent or unaccompanied youth
- Transport student to school of origin (if appropriate)

What are Homeless Education Liaisons required to do?

- Facilitate identification and enrollment by knowing the law, train school staff and display parent/youth posters in each school
- Make sure that homeless students receive transportation (if appropriate), free meals, Title I and early education services...and all other services available to non-homeless students
- Link homeless students to appropriate services in both the school and the community

How do we “Get It Right” regarding identification and enrollment?

Getting It Right: Identification and Enrollment of Homeless Children and Youth



How do we identify and enroll homeless students?

Ensure that school personnel know how to identify and refer students to the Homeless Education Liaison by using the “*Referral Form*”

Referral to Homeless Education Liaison

(For individual supervisory union/school district use only. Do not submit to the Vermont Department of Education)

Date: _____

Person Making Referral: _____

School/Agency and Position: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail Address: _____

Student Information:

I have identified a student who may be experiencing homelessness (*lacking a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence*) and would like to make a referral to the Homeless Education Liaison.

Student(s) Name(s): _____

School in which student was last enrolled: _____

Student's current address: _____

Student's Phone #: _____

Reason for Referral: *Please check and provide details if available.*

- ☐ Shelter Resident
- ☐ Shared Housing (Doubled Up)
- ☐ Motel or Hotel Resident
- ☐ Campground/Tent
- ☐ Unaccompanied Youth (*not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian and lacking a fixed, adequate, and regular nighttime residence*)
- ☐ Other: _____

Liaison Information:

Supervisory Union/School District: _____

Homeless Education Liaison: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____ Email: _____

Date Liaison received referral: _____

Who do you contact when you identify a student who may be homeless?

- Who to contact in each school building?
(Example: teacher talks to the principal/assistant principal/guidance counselor who then contacts the homeless education liaison.)
- Use of the referral form

How can we support a student experiencing homelessness?

- Have a “Check In” person who is trusted by the student (if appropriate)
- Assist with transportation
- Refer student to guidance, educational support team, child protection team (if appropriate)
- Refer student to afterschool programs (if appropriate)
- Maintain confidentiality
- Focus on the “Best Interest” of the child

What are some examples of situations we have seen in our schools?

- Think of some situations that have happened in your schools and discuss them.

Information for Parents



If your family lives in any of the following situations:

- In a shelter, motel, vehicle, or campground
- On the street
- In an abandoned building, trailer, or other inadequate accommodations, or
- Doubled up with friends or relatives because you cannot find or afford housing

Then, your preschool-aged and school-aged children have certain rights or protections under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act.

Your children have the right to:

- Go to school, no matter where you live or how long you have lived there. They must be given access to the same public education, including preschool education, provided to other children.
- Continue in the school they attended before you became homeless or the school they last attended, if that is your choice and is feasible. If a school sends your child to a school other than the one you request, the school must provide you with a written explanation and offer you the right to appeal the decision.
- Receive transportation to the school they attended before your family became homeless or the school they last attended, if you or a guardian request such transportation.
- Attend a school and participate in school programs with children who are not homeless. Children cannot be separated from the regular school program because they are homeless.
- Enroll in school without giving a permanent address. Schools cannot require proof of residency that might prevent or delay school enrollment.
- Enroll and attend classes while the school arranges for the transfer of school and immunization records or any other documents required for enrollment.
- Enroll and attend classes in the school of your choice even while the school and you seek to resolve a dispute over enrolling your children.
- Receive the same special programs and services, if needed, as provided to all other children served in these programs.
- Receive transportation to school and to school programs.

When you move, you should do the following:

- Contact the school district's local liaison for homeless education (see phone number below) for help in enrolling your child in a new school or arranging for your child to continue in his or her former school. (Or, someone at a shelter, social services office, or the school can direct you to the person you need to contact.)
- Contact the school and provide any information you think will assist the teachers in helping your child adjust to new circumstances.
- Ask the local liaison for homeless education, the shelter provider, or a social worker for assistance with clothing and supplies, if needed.

Local Area Contacts:

State Coordinator:

If you need further assistance, call the National Center for Homeless Education at the toll-free Helpline number:
1-800-308-2145



Information for School-Aged Youth



If your family lives in any of the following situations:

- In a shelter, motel, vehicle, or campground
- On the street
- In an abandoned building, trailer, or other inadequate accommodations, or
- Doubled up with friends or relatives because you cannot find or afford housing

Then, you have certain rights or protections under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act.

You have the right to:

- Go to school, no matter where you live or how long you have lived there. You must be given access to the same public education provided to other students.
- Continue in the school you attended before you became homeless or the school you last attended if that is your choice and is feasible. The school district's local liaison for homeless education must advise you, if needed, and offer you the right to appeal a decision regarding your choice of school if it goes against your wishes.
- Receive transportation to the school you attended before you became homeless or the school you last attended if you request such transportation.
- Attend a school and participate in school programs with students who are not homeless. Students cannot be separated from the regular school program because they are homeless.
- Enroll in school without giving a permanent address. Schools cannot require proof of residency that might prevent or delay school enrollment.
- Enroll and attend classes while the school arranges for the transfer of school and immunization records or any other documents required for enrollment.
- Enroll and attend classes in the school of your choice even while the school and you seek to resolve a dispute over enrollment.
- Receive the same special programs and services, if needed, as provided to all other students served in these programs.
- Receive transportation to school and to school programs.

When you move, you should do the following:

- Contact the school district's local liaison for homeless education (see phone number below) for help in enrolling in a new school or enrolling to continue in your former school. (Or, someone at a shelter, social services office, or the school can direct you to the person you need to contact.)
- Tell your teachers anything that you think they need to know to help you in school.
- Ask the local liaison for homeless education, the shelter provider, or a social worker for assistance with clothing and supplies, if needed.

Local Area Contacts:

State Coordinator:

If you need further assistance, call the National Center for Homeless Education at the toll-free Helpline number:

1-800-308-2145



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This PowerPoint Presentation, and additional resources can be found on the Vermont's Department of Education's Homeless Education website at:

www.state.vt.us/educ/new/html/pgm_homeless.html

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